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Youth work in a rural church

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YOUTH WORK IN A RURAL CHURCH

BY

VERNA GERTRUDE PALMER

**A THESIS
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**TO THE MINISTERS
OF
RURAL CHURCHES**

PREFACE

Youth work has been an important part of the activity of the churches. Most of the studies about it and most of the programs for young people, however, seem to concern town and city churches more than rural churches.

It is my purpose in the paper to present a study of the work that is being done with and for young people in rural churches in Virginia. First a survey will be made of conditions which contribute to the problems of youth work in rural churches in general. Then the youth activities and problems of churches in Virginia will be considered. The Taylorsville Baptist Church, which has been the center of my life since I became a member there two years ago, will be used as an example. After an analysis has been made of its situation, a plan will be presented which will be suitable for the young people of Taylorsville.

I am grateful to Dr. Solon B. Cousins and Mr. P. Stanley Lusby for reading the first draft of this thesis and offering suggestions. I wish to express my appreciation to the ministers of the rural churches of Virginia who helped so much by answering the questionnaires which were used in this study.

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Introduction

Two years ago a young ministerial student with hope in his heart, visions in his eyes, and plans in his head became pastor of a rural church about twenty-five miles from a large city. At first one was struck by the friendliness of the congregation, by the fairly large attendance for a country church, and by the fact that there was a large Sunday school building attached to the church, and a large parsonage. It was summer. The grounds were beautiful; the church attractive with the flowers brought from neighboring gardens. Plans were being made for the Vacation Bible School. There was talk of a Sunday school picnic later in the summer. A talk with the minister revealed the dreams of a church serving the community, reaching the lost, meeting the needs of its members, dreams of modernizing the building, and beautifying it.

That was two years ago. The dreams are still in the heart of the pastor and a few members of the congregation. The church is much the same in appearance, though more in need of paint now. Some of the people are still friendly, but two years gives one time to see more clearly under the surface. There has been no progress in this church. Why? It is similar to other churches all over the United States. What are the reasons for the decline of a church in spite of the dreams and hopes of those who love it? Is it the fault of the community? the church? Perhaps it is the minister who is at fault. Or the leaders. Perhaps there are other

factors involved. Most probably it is a combination of all.

But all churches are not in the same condition, although some aspects of their situation may be similar. Some churches in the country are fulfilling the dreams of those who dream.

The statements have been made that the hope of the church is its youth, and that the city churches depend upon the young people who grow up in the rural churches. A declining church is not meeting the needs of its own young people, nor preparing the young people for leadership in its own or another church. The church needs to understand itself, realize its position and its condition, and then seek to improve itself that it might render the service that is required of it. By studying what other rural churches are doing with their young people, a church may build a program for its own youth, that they might go out and serve Christ by serving others.

Chapter I
FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE PROBLEMS
OF RURAL YOUTH WORK

The Community

Neighborhood-community relationships

Sometimes one sees a church in the open country, with perhaps half a dozen houses scattered nearby. There may be a school and a store also. To these places come the people from the surrounding country, for a radius of from one to three or more miles. These people associate with each other more frequently than with others from a more distant village. This is known as a "rural neighborhood; it is the area of association most common in such sections as the southern Appalachian Highlands and much of the South."¹ The group of families in a neighborhood are socially related by visiting, helping each other in emergencies, work, and in various other ways.

¹
Sanderson, Dwight, Rural Sociology and Rural Social Organization, p. 5

The rural community is larger than the neighborhood. It includes the village center to which go the people from the surrounding neighborhoods. There are more stores, more churches, more houses, and other buildings and organizations in the villages.

Sanderson defines a rural community as "a form of association maintained between the people and their institutions in a local area in which they live on dispersed farmsteads and in a village which usually forms the center of their common activities."² Although the area of the community is "defined by a boundary within which the village forms the center of the common activities of most of the families,"³ there are many communities in the open country, particularly in the South, which do not have a village center.

There may be several neighborhoods in a community, each with its local center serving the majority of the people in the area. Community areas differ in size according to the proximity of villages to each other. Where villages are far apart, communities are large, and transportation difficulties arise which affect the church. Many country roads are in poor condition, particularly in inclement weather; many people do not have automobiles in which to travel; pastors have long distances to travel to visit

²
Ibid., p. 278

³
Ibid., p. 279

members of their congregation; attendance at church is poor, and many people are unreached by the church.

A community is more than a geographical area in which a group of people live. It is the relationship of the people in that area. It is the one-ness or unity of the group which causes it to be a community - a likeness of interest or activity. When this interest or activity is centered around the Christian church, the community may have a more Christian attitude.

Effect of urban areas on the community

If the community has many organizations to meet the interests of the population, (granges, stores, 4H clubs, moving picture theatres, clubs, as well as the school and church,) the people will be in closer contact and will tend to stay within the community for most of their activities. However, the closer the community is to a large urban center, the more the people will travel to that center, since roads and transportation to urban centers are good. The urban centers draw people from the community for work, pleasure, and worship, unless the community provides these for the majority. A vital community program is necessary. In particular there should be a vital program to interest the young people and to keep them in the community until they are developed sufficiently physically, mentally, and spiritually to go out into urban centers as potential leaders, strong in Christian ideals. The responsibility of the rural church is to meet this challenge.

Industrial communities

A community is considered rural if its population is under 2,500. It may be agricultural or industrial. The rural industrial community is usually rural in size of population only, not in other aspects: for whereas in most rural communities the individualism of the people is pronounced, in the industrial village "the individualism of the ruralite is brought under the yoke of industrial discipline."⁴ Hence the church which is "an institution born of individualism is here faced with a situation in which there is a high degree of social control."⁵ This causes a different sort of problem for the church: that of serving a rural community which is controlled by other than the desires of the individual members of the congregation.

Migration of Youth

Contributions to the decline of the rural church

The migration of youth from rural to urban centers has been considered as a major reason for the decline of the country church. It has been felt that the best potential leaders go to the cities. Although some have thought that this migration of population is a serious problem and a harm to the rural districts, this view is not held by many sociologists. On the contrary, this migration has been a benefit to both country and city life. If there were not this migration, many rural areas "would have been seriously over populated and the standard of living would have been nec-

⁴ Brunner, Edmund de S., Industrial Village Churches, p. 5

⁵ Ibid.

essarily lower."⁶

Contribution to urban life

Also, cities need the influx of country people in order to maintain urban population. The cities are dependent upon the young people to carry on life in the city. For this reason the young people are to be prepared by the rural society in every way possible.

The attitudes and understandings acquired on farms, in rural homes and schools affect industrial relations indirectly. Further, the training of rural children and youth in the use of tact, in the art of compromise, in group activity, in the values of human personality, in religion of fellowship, in an understanding of religious and cultural differences - should in time materially improve the relationships among all urban groups, and thus tend to give stability to the nation. ⁷

Since city churches depend so much upon the membership which transfers from country churches, and depend upon them for leadership, rural churches have a responsibility to prepare their young people for leadership in the church. "The actual increase in city population depends upon the supply the country releases. What sort of church members this released section will make in the city is conditioned by the type of

⁶ Sanderson, op. cit., p. 88

⁷ Ulrey, A., The Church and Agriculture, p. 7

church they attended back home."⁸

Transfer of wealth to urban areas

One of the bad effects of this rural-urban migration is that the wealth of the country is drained into the city areas. "Wealth goes to the cities through the migration of rural youth, the cost of whose rearing has been borne by the farmer, but whose abilities are an asset to the cities. With only 9 percent of the nation's income, farmers educate 31 percent of its children."⁹ The resulting small amount of wealth in the country is reflected in the lack of support of rural churches.

Just as the city population has been taxed to help provide education for rural children, it has been suggested that city churches help support the rural churches which eventually provide them with members and leaders.

There is a steady trend toward equalizing the cost of rural schools within the whole area of a country and by state subsidies, so that the cities - to which much of the rural wealth flows - share in the cost of maintaining country schools. There is equal reason for equalizing the cost of supporting the rural church. This has been partially accomplished by so-called home missionary aid from city to rural churches, but in too many instances this has been used chiefly to maintain competing churches. The problem goes much farther and deeper. The city church depends quite largely upon members and clergy who have come from the country, and without them it would lose much of its vitality. If it is just to tax the cities for the support of the rural schools, is it not equally fair for them to help in maintaining the rural churches

⁸ Schroeder, Martin, The Country Church is Different, p. 2

⁹ Sanderson, op. cit., p. 667

through an equalization of church funds, so that the rural minister may have an adequate standard of living, may be able to purchase the books he needs, and educate his children?"¹⁰

The Minister

It is the minister who is the natural leader of the country church, and quite often of the community as a whole. He is looked to for the inspiration and guidance needed in living the Christian life. He it is who is usually the best educated member of the church and the one most capable of carrying out a Christian program in church and community.

Number of churches per minister

One of the most serious obstacles to a good religious education program in a church is the lack of full time ministerial leadership. "Many studies have demonstrated that the non-resident or part-time minister cannot produce as good results as the resident on full time, yet only 23.5 percent of white Protestant churches have undivided ministerial service"¹¹ in industrial villages. "In the agricultural villages the proportion of churches with full time resident pastors was 42.1 percent."¹²

If the minister must serve more than one church and particularly if the churches are in separate communities, it is difficult for him to know all the problems of the church and of his people.

¹⁰

¹¹ Ibid., p. 326

¹² Brunner, op. cit., p. 155

Ibid.

He cannot make personal visits as he would like or as his people expect. The conditions would be better in one church if the pastor had only one church to serve because he loses so much time in traveling from community to community.

Many of the churches are small and cannot afford to support a full time minister. One reason advanced for this is that there are too many small churches and the financial support available must be divided. Consequently there is no possibility of an adequate and effective program.

"On the average, each rural minister serves 1.7 churches. In 1920, 45 percent of the rural ministers served single churches; 25 percent served two points; 15 percent served three points, and 15 percent had four or more churches."¹³

Resident ministers

If the minister is living within the community where he serves as pastor, his church has a better chance of flourishing than it has if he lives elsewhere.

All investigations render proof that if the country church is to grow and accomplish its real mission it must have a resident minister who will identify his life in a sympathetic, understanding way with his people - a minister who has a real program, carried out in a conscientious, efficient manner."¹⁴

One third of the ministers, studied in a survey of 100, serving industrial village churches, are non-resident, and each of these men has an average of 2.5 churches under his care. Even

¹³ Sanderson, op. cit., p. 333

¹⁴ McLaughlin, Henry, The New Call, p. 16

those reside in villages are not, many of them, free to give their undivided care to the work of the local church. Many minister, with one or more churches, have another occupation besides the ministry.

In 1930 in 21 counties, 45 percent of all the white Protestant churches had resident pastors, of whom 26 percent had non-resident pastors, and 7 percent were vacant....Four times as many village churches had full time resident pastors as did the country churches, and twice as many village churches had part time resident pastors as did those in the country."¹⁵

One of the reasons for the decline of the open-country church is the lack of leadership resulting from non-resident pastorates. In speaking of the Sunday schools, Mr. McLaughlin says that "the schools which produce the greatest number of church members and of life work recruits for Christian service, are the schools which have an active resident minister."¹⁶

Salary

The low salary of the minister is the principal reason for his taking more than one church to serve and causing him to live elsewhere than in the community of which he is pastor. Compared with men of other professions the rural pastor is poorly paid in spite of the fact that he is usually furnished with a parsonage in addition to his salary. Because of these small salaries, the

¹⁵

Sanderson, op. cit., p. 332

¹⁶

Ibid., p. 153

best ministers leave the country to serve in city churches.

It is the open country pastorate which is in most need of a resident minister.

Ministers are, even in rural districts, concentrated in small towns, while the open country is left without frequent ministerial service. Before rural ministers are available for all rural groups, farm income must be increased, more local county roads built, and very small churches consolidated so as to make possible larger church groups."¹⁷

Tenure

Another factor militating against a successful rural church program is the short tenure of the rural pastor. Half of the pastors stay three years or less in the country pastorates.

When the main function of the minister was to be a good preacher for Sunday services, the length of his stay in one church was not so important, but if he is to be an educator, a pastor in the best sense of the word, and a leader in community improvement, he needs a year or two to get acquainted with his people and the community before he can do effective work. One important reason for short pastorates is that some of these men are not wanted longer. On the other hand, it has been repeatedly demonstrated that the most successful rural church leader is not the brilliant pulpit speaker, but the man who knows his people and who is a real pastor to whom they can go for counsel and leadership because they have confidence in him. Such men have long pastorates and build up strong rural churches, because they are real leaders and they develop leadership among their people."¹⁸

Training and Education

¹⁷

Hamilton, Charles H., and Garnett, William, The Role of the Church in Rural Community Life in Virginia, p. 114

¹⁸

Sanderson, op. cit., p. 334

The general trend has been for ministers of country churches to be chosen from those who are in training for city churches, those who cannot get city churches or those who are not educated for them. The majority of rural pastors are either quite young men or are older men. There is a shortage of middle aged men in the country pastorates. It is unfortunate that many ministers consider it beneath their dignity to serve in rural churches.

There is a great need for pastors who train for rural work with the view of spending their lives in that field, as others train for the foreign mission field. Many have heard and answered the call to the country parish. But more are needed - trained, interested, consecrated men. Many seminaries are now offering courses in rural church work. The need is for ministers educated in rural sociology and psychology. It has been suggested that they study some agriculture if they are going into agricultural communities, or industrial problems if they are to go into an industrial community. "A major handicap of many rural ministers is their lack of knowledge of agriculture and country life, a knowledge which is essential for them to understand the problems and attitudes of their parishoners."¹⁹

Some estimates of the number of educated ministers of rural churches have been made. "In 1930, 70 percent of the village

pastors and 49 percent of the country church pastors in 21 counties were college or seminary graduates or had graduated from both, whereas 29 percent of village and 51 percent of the country pastors had less than a college education.²⁰ In the same study it was found that 64 percent of resident pastors of rural churches graduated from college, seminary or both, while only 38 percent of the non-resident pastors were graduates of one or both. These figures may be taken as indicative of the situation at large. It is not difficult to see why the country churches with non-resident ministers have poorer programs than village or urban churches.

Leadership ability

The pastor, as the natural leader of the church, is the unifying control of the rural church. Most of the responsibility for the success of the total program of the church falls upon the minister who is usually the only one trained for such a position of responsibility. Most rural churches are not large enough and do not have sufficient funds to pay for a trained religious education director. Neither are many of them large enough for a council to direct a program of education. However, even in churches which do organize in such a way as to unify their religious education program by an Education Council, the minister

is the one to give it proper leadership. "This leadership must know all about the objectives of the organization, the force at its disposal, and be intimately acquainted with all the methods and machinery to be developed and used."²¹

It is important for the minister to be educated, not only that he may be a leader in the church and in the community, enriching the life of the congregation and understanding how to help them in their needs, but he must also be prepared to train others for positions of leadership. "The fact that most of the rural churches are served by part time pastors makes it impractical for the pastor to influence in a very vital way the religious education program of the churches he serves unless he trains his leaders to carry on in his absence."²²

Lay Leadership

In a rural church the leadership, except for that provided by the minister, must be on a volunteer basis, for the church cannot usually afford to pay more than the minister's salary. And the church must recognize that it cannot depend entirely upon the minister for leadership. The leaders of the church must be so trained for leadership that the church will function efficiently in the absence of the minister. "All progress depends on leadership, and leadership arises from a divine dis-

²¹

Agar, Frederick, The Competent Church, p. 58

²²

McLaughlin, Henry, Religious Education in the Rural Church, p. 73

content with existing conditions."²³

No programs for improvement, however well financed or sound in their objective, will be able to succeed without competent as well as zealous and devoted leadership ... But if this leadership is to be permanently successful it must recognize that no movement can succeed which depends solely upon employed leadership. The ultimate success of any movement depends upon its enlistment of local lay leaders who serve a cause because of their devotion to it, and the test of employed or professional leadership is the degree to which it can enlist and train local leaders."²⁴

Characteristics of leaders

The attitudes of the leaders are reflected in the lives of the young people in the church and in the community also. If we expect to build a Christian community through the young people of the church we must have a Christian church. A church is made up of its members. If they are living according to the principles of Christ, if they are committed to His cause, their lives will be a positive influence in the community and its young people.

By giving the people a program which will guide them in their Christian living and show them how to apply the teachings of Christ in their lives, the church will be much more effective than if it merely teaches about Christianity.

The principle on which Christianity is built, the principle

²³

Sanderson, Dwight, Disadvantaged Classes in Rural Life, p.6

²⁴

Ibid.

of love, is the one which must be upheld and demonstrated by church leaders in order for them to be effective. All the leadership ability in the world is of no lasting value if it is not dominated by unselfish love, such as is demonstrated in the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ, whose way of life the church is seeking to make known to men.

The leader must possess "such qualities of leadership as will inspire enlistment, cooperation, and development from every other person related to the organization. These qualities of leadership are both spiritual and personal. They comprehend love, knowledge, courage, tact, and industry."²⁵

Some qualities of leadership are as follows: ability in a specific field, willingness to cooperate, sensitivity to the needs of others, patience, a vision of the goals to be reached, perseverance, enthusiasm, flexibility, a sense of humor, and an infinite love.

Trained leaders are needed because there is so great a necessity for keeping young people interested and training them for work in Christ's kingdom on earth. The leaders are not always persons of understanding and tact. "Reports from a number of rural churches indicate that leadership of church programs and activities is frequently in the hands of adults who have little understanding of, or consideration for, youths' special interests."²⁶

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Garnett, W.E., Virginia Rural Youth Adjustments, p. 31

Many leaders plan programs that they think should be followed, whether or not they appeal to the young people. The opinions of the young people, when expressed, are often disregarded or considered radical. Dr. Ralph S. Adams of Bangor Theological Seminary is quoted by Dr. McLaughlin²⁷ on the matter of youth-adult differences.

Age is at the helm. The leaders are set in their ways and meet the suggestion of new methods or new ideas of religious education with resistance and finality. Youth, if at all present, is forced to conform to the wishes of the leaders ... Youthful enthusiasm is interpreted as wildness and youthful desires for innovations and for self-expression are considered indications of irreverence and a lack of respect for the 'old time religion'. The teachers are without special training or guidance, - a good heart and good intentions are considered adequate qualifications for teaching the spiritual principles necessary to the abundant life. The great movement of rural youth to the city also affects the type and quality of church and Sunday school leadership in the training in the country church. The opportunity for the profitable use of educational training today in the rural community are considerably limited, whereas, in the city community they are limitless. Those who remain to lead the Sunday school and to teach the youth, often lead and teach from a limited educational outlook, insufficient to the demands of the situation and the needs of the day.

Training and Education of leaders

Many leaders in rural churches have had very little education or training. "According to the returns from 219 question-

naires, only 12.3 percent of the rural Sunday school teachers were college graduates, 33 percent had attended college; but 26.5 had only a grade school education."²⁸ Although these figures refer to only Sunday school teachers, the situation is similar for other leaders. "Of 280 Sunday school teachers reporting, 167, or 59.6 percent, had never taken a single teacher's training course or received a credit for standard work; 86 percent had taken 3 or less teacher's training courses."²⁹

The weaknesses in the training of Sunday school teachers and workers has been summarized clearly by the Department of Rural Sociology of the Virginia Agricultural Experimental Station in Blacksburg, Virginia:

- (1) Sunday school teachers do not have a clear conception of the function of the church in relation to rural life needs; and thus the Sunday school plays a relatively small part in the development of a better type of rural community life.
- (2) Leadership training classes in the small rural church are very infrequent except where there has been effective inter-denominational cooperation. Rural Sunday school teachers most in need of leadership training are not being reached by the denominational schools held in the larger cities and towns.
- (3) The program of leadership training does not sufficiently take into consideration the fact that a large percentage of Sunday school teachers are mothers with home responsibilities who cannot leave their local communities for leadership training schools held elsewhere. 30

²⁸

Hamilton and Garnett, op. cit., p. 104

²⁹

Ibid.

³⁰

Ibid., p. 108

The churches need to take advantage of the opportunities offered by different agencies for training in leadership as well as for help in providing speakers for church programs. Besides the extension departments of the denominational boards and of various church-related colleges, the International Council of Religious Education is a source of help and guidance to the rural church. Training schools are held in agricultural colleges for rural pastors and leaders. The Extension Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture also provides help.

The rural church leaders - local ministers, state and national, denominational and inter-denominational bodies - are increasing services for the secular educational forces. Such services includes: speakers and resource persons at institutes and conferences, bulletins and pamphlets for the agricultural colleges and to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and assistance in training programs on methods and subject matter.³¹

The Church

The country church should be the center of life of the community, uniting it in a spirit of love. The church must meet all the needs of the community, spiritual, mental, physical, and social. In order to do this it must cooperate with the other community institutions. The purpose of the church is well stated in the following quotation.

³¹

Ulrey, op. cit., p. 3

The functions of the country church are to create, to maintain and to enlarge both individual and community ideals, under the aspiration and guidance of the Christian motive and teachings; and to help rural people to inculcate these ideals in personal, in family, and in community life; in agricultural and industrial effort; in civic activities; and in all social relationships. 32

Number of churches in the community

One church for each thousand population is the ideal ratio, but in rural Virginia there were 3.8 white churches per 1,000 population - or one church for each 263 people. There were only 1.2 churches per 1,000 population in Virginia cities. In 20 counties there were more than five, and in 10 counties, more than six churches per 1,000 population. 33

These churches are usually of different denominations, each with a small membership. A more efficient church could be had if the several denominations combined their membership (and their financial support) into one community church.

"Villages, towns, and cities are more over-churched than open country districts in comparison with the distribution of schools. In most small towns and villages there are from three to seven churches and only one school." 34

The several churches in one community cause the young people of the community to be divided into small religious

32

Hamilton, Charles, Religious Education in Relation to Rural Life in Virginia, p. 3

33 Hamilton and Garnett, op. cit., p. 34

34 Ibid., p. 41

groups, rather than being in the closer fellowship that would be possible in one large church. Although the high school young people are together in one school during the week, an artificial separation is caused on Sundays by the barrier of denominationalism. Small groups of young people in several churches have less successful group activities than do those in larger churches.

Cooperation of churches

A cause of the large number of small, inefficient churches has been due to improper functioning of denominationalism. A more adequate and effective Christian program may be carried on in a rural community as the churches, while maintaining their varying convictions, cooperate. This organization can be based on their fundamental belief in one God, Jesus Christ as Master, and the worth of the individual personality. So far the movement for cooperation has not been very successful in many places.

The most commonly practiced denominational cooperation is the arrangement of alternate preaching dates in the same community. This type of cooperation costs nothing and often results in solidifying denominational lines. Union Sunday schools and young people's organizations are occasionally found in rural communities but such organizations usually languish because of neglect by denominational authorities... In Virginia denominations have as yet rarely shown a willingness to withdraw from a community in which they happen to be the weakest group. Nor has there been any concerted move on the part of the larger denominational bodies to divide the field so as to eliminate duplications in church work. 35

The Virginia Council of Religious Education is an inter-denominational body which has promoted leadership training and higher standards of religious education. The council "holds a large number of county or district forums and conferences every year, assists in conducting daily vacation Bible schools, and helps to stimulate interest in young people's work."³⁶

Consolidation

The unity of the people of a community in one local church served by one minister has been the solution to the problem of inefficient churches in many places. In this way the salaries may be combined into one which may obtain a trained resident minister. The equipment of one church also will be sufficient for a good church program. The spirit of a unified people in church will carry over into the life of the community. There are three types of consolidation. The first is the federated type, in which each person maintains his membership in his original denomination, but unites with another for local work. The second is the denominational type, in which competing churches withdraw by agreement. In the last type of consolidation, the church is independent of any denomination. The federated type would seem to be more suitable for rural churches in many areas. By belonging to a denomination, the church may receive financial, leadership, or other types of aid as it is needed. The people

³⁶Ibid., p. 44

work with the church and community and thereby tend to unite the community, whereas if they went outside of the community to a church of their own denomination, the fellowship would not be so close.

Size of church and membership

The majority of rural churches are small and therefore usually inefficient. "A small church is unable to maintain a full time, properly trained minister, to supply adequate equipment, to subdivide its membership into various age and sex groups for more effective and concentrated work, and to develop a division of labor in leadership."³⁷ In order to have efficient organization there should be at least 150 members in a church. The 1926 United States Census of Religious Bodies revealed that there was a report from only 16 counties "where the average membership per church was more than 150, and all these counties include either a number of small towns or suburban areas. In 18 counties there were 75 members or less per rural church, and in 39 counties there were 100 members or less."³⁸

Of the white young people surveyed in the Virginia rural youth survey church membership was reported by 76 percent of the boys and by 84 percent of the girls. Church attendance of 12 or

³⁷

Ibid., p. 27

³⁸

Ibid., p. 30

more times during 1935 was reported by 62 percent of the boys³⁹ and by 69 percent of the girls.

One reason for infrequent attendance at church is, obviously, that some churches hold few and infrequent services. "One denomination reported that in 1941 660 of its 1.170 churches had only monthly preaching. Similar conditions prevail in other denominations."⁴⁰

The same survey showed that Sunday school membership was reported by 41 percent of the boys and by 53 percent of the girls. Membership in church young people's societies was claimed by only 7 percent of the boys and by only 14 percent of the girls. "Available data indicate that the majority of the young people in church youth organizations live in cities or small towns or are connected with the strong country churches...Such groups touch relatively few of the youth from the weaker churches."⁴¹

Membership in industrial village churches is smaller than in agricultural village churches. "The churches, especially the Protestant churches, in the rural-industrial communities are distinctly weaker than those in agricultural villages in the proportion of active members on the total roll. The proportion of active Protestant members is barely three-fifths of the total

³⁹

Garnett, op. cit., p. 22

⁴⁰

Ibid.

⁴¹

Ibid.

Protestant enrollment in the industrial villages studies, but nearly four-fifths in the agricultural.⁴² Labor turnover causes church membership to be unstable in industrial areas.

When the agricultural and industrial village churches were compared in enlistment of young people, it was found that they were similar. "Those between the ages of 10 and 20 years made up 20 percent of the population of the industrial and 23.9 percent of the agricultural villages. The churches in the first group had secured 25.3 percent of their membership in this age group; those in the agricultural villages 22.3 percent."⁴³

Location

The effectiveness of a church is often dependent upon its location. If it is in the center of a community it can be of more service to the community and can be reached more easily by the majority of its members. The church which does not have adequate facilities may often use those of the community advantageously if located near them. In communities where the Week-day Religious Education program is in operation, the church and school can cooperate more easily if they are closely situated, the children being released from the school for classes to be held in the church. On the other hand the school's recreation

⁴²

Brunner, op. cit., p. 127

⁴³

Ibid., p. 135

facilities may be made available for use by the young people's groups of the church.

Sometimes the churches are very poorly located, there being more than one church of a single denomination in a fairly small area. "In one country location, one county had four churches of the same denomination which were within an eight-mile section of a hard-surface state highway."⁴⁴

Equipment

The usual rural church is a one room building, built for the preaching service. "Three out of four of our town and country churches are one or two room buildings of unattractive and nearly uniform design."⁴⁵ In most churches in industrial communities, there is no church building, but the congregation uses a rented hall or store. Many churches do not have available space for social functions, or other kinds of meetings, and no separate rooms for Sunday school. The equipment often is not in good condition. "The churches are so little used, the membership is so small and the financial support so meager that the equipment is often in a state of decay. The floor, seats, walls, windows, and pulpit are often anything but attractive."⁴⁶ The poor condition of existing equipment has a negative effect upon the

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⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 34

⁴⁶ Gee, Wilson, The Social Economics of Agriculture, p. 660

⁴⁸ Taylor, Carl, Rural Sociology, p. 229

attitudes of those who attend the churches. An unattractive, neglected church is not usually conducive to an attitude of worship. The young people not only compare the programs offered in public schools with those of the church, but also compare the surroundings. The usual rural church is surpassed in both by the rural schools of today. The appearance of the rural church does not seem to honor God.

The condition of the equipment may be the cause of complete lack of attendance also. "The heating of many of the rural churches is so poor that it handicaps, sometimes completely eliminates, the church program during the winter months."⁴⁷

However, a one or two room church does not necessarily mean a poor program, for there are numerous instances where successful programs have been carried out under adverse conditions. But churches should strive to improve their building situations in order to have better programs more easily. It is a "matter of fact that churches with three rooms or more make proportionately from 50 to 300 percent better records through various features of the church program, especially in relation to religious education."⁴⁸

⁴⁷

Ibid.

⁴⁸

Gee, Wilson, op. cit., p. 660

Needs for Religious Education in Rural Areas

Unchurched young people

It is dismaying when one reads the statistics concerning the number of people in the United States who are not being reached by the Christian church. "Surveys in various and diverse areas showed from three to ten times as many unchurched people in the average rural field as attended services in its church."⁴⁹ The situation seems even worse when one realizes how many of these are young people who know nothing about God. "Of the 15 millions of farm children - children under 21 years of age - more than 4 millions are virtual pagans, children without knowledge of God. If, perchance, they know the words to curse with, they do not know the Word to live by."⁵⁰

In the southern states alone, about two-thirds of the rural people do not belong to a church. The figures are slightly better in Virginia, where "one-half of the people are unchurched."⁵¹ According to other statements, the young people are receiving less religious instruction in proportion to their numbers, than is the population in general. "A study of young people's religious organizations show that less than 25 percent of the eligible young people are being reached."⁵²

⁴⁹ Freeman, John, "The Teaching Task of Rural Churches," The Sunday School Builder, July, 1948, 7

⁵⁰ Gee, op. cit., p. 648

⁵¹ "Crisis in Virginia," W.M.U. Mission Study Book, p. 6

⁵² Hamilton, op. cit., p. 6

The picture of so many without Christ is a challenge to every church to endeavor to reach them all. Much is being done through the Weekday Religious Education program in which schools cooperate with the schools and churches by releasing the children for a period of religious education and instruction. Many children who have never been in a Sunday school or church hear about God in this way. But the majority of young people are not being so reached. The church must redouble its efforts to reach them, remembering that the church of tomorrow is built on the youth of today. They, with their vitality, must be shown how to live for God and be given a chance to serve Him through worship and fellowship, and giving themselves to a worthy cause. In this way the tide of rural paganism which is threatening the church may be stemmed. The eagerness of young people to do things must be utilized before they fall into the lethargy which characterizes the adult congregation in the usual country church.

Needs of young people

That the church has not been meeting the needs of the young people is evidenced by the fact that so many of them leave its fellowship during this important period of their lives.

Some of the basic needs of young people are health, a feeling of well-being; mastery and successful completion of their undertakings; approval, recognition, and appreciation; new and stimulating experiences; self-respect; a sense of forgiveness

for moral failure; comradeship; and guidance in personality growth. The church can meet all of these needs in its program for young people. But few churches are doing it.

The church is not enlisting the loyalty and interest of the young people, neither is it doing its best to develop character. The life of the church is not active enough for youth. There is too much emphasis on preaching and not enough on doing. The need to be active and successful should be met by the leaders, both the pastor and lay leaders, in planned activities and service for the church.

There should always be something doing in the life of the country church to occupy the thoughts and energies of the youth. There should constantly be kept before the young people the fact that they must train for the leadership of the church of the future; the minister should challenge them with opportunity for leadership in the church. He should guide them in service for God and humanity. 53

The social life in most rural churches is very slight. When this important need of young people is not met by any agency in the community, it should certainly be considered a major responsibility of the church. If it is met by other agencies, the church should cooperate and see that recreational activities are kept wholesome.

There is need for a broad and varying recreation program that includes not only all of our familiar sports and games but also social recreation of all kinds, and handicraft, dramatics, and the creative arts in a non-professional way - thus embodying some valuable kinds of education often omitted from country schooling. Wholesome recreation has far-reaching influence, especially marked in adolescence, in preventing anxiety and in helping to form emotionally balanced personalities. 54

The church can also meet the health needs, and needs for preparation for home-making and marriage of rural youth.

Most of all each person needs the assurance of divine help, of communion with God. There is a need for something supreme and worth-while to which the young people can give their loyalty. This need can be met in Christ and His cause. The need of a sense of forgiveness is met in the forgiveness offered by Christ. The need for security and stability is met by commitment to Him. He meets every need of every person who allows Him to become the center of life.

This leads to another need - that of knowledge. How can they know unless they are taught? It is the responsibility of every Christian in the church to introduce the young people to Christ, enlist their loyalty to Him, and show them that Christianity is a way of life. With Him as the guide and center of each life in the church, there are no limits to what can be ac-

complished in the rural church and community. They can be shown how the Christian principles should be applied to all aspects of their lives.

Chapter II

YOUTH WORK IN THE RURAL CHURCHES OF VIRGINIA

The simplest rural church organizations have preaching services from once a month to four times a month. Most of them hold annual revival services, lasting from one to three weeks. But even those which have a preacher only once a month, have Sunday school every Sunday.

Some churches are more active than others. It does not always depend upon the size of the church, as has already been noted. Although a large church is the ideal and has a better chance of a successful program, small churches with enthusiastic leadership carry on good programs which strive to meet their needs and those of the community.

In addition to the preaching services and the Sunday school, many rural churches have other activities for their young people.

In order to get a clearer understanding of what young

people are doing in the rural churches of Virginia now, and to know what problems are encountered in this work, questionnaires were sent to ministers of rural churches of the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian denominations. The churches were suggested by representatives of each board. They were chosen from all over the state of Virginia, in the open country and in small towns.

It is understood that a questionnaire is not nearly as satisfactory as a personal visit to each church, but it serves as an indication of conditions which exist and which can be observed, at least on the surface.

The questionnaire concerned the equipment of the church, its program for young people between the ages of 12 and 21, and the problems the ministers encountered relating to the program for young people in the church or community. The results of the questionnaires have been summarized according to the participation of the young people in church and community affairs, recreation, the problems which the ministers stated, and ways in which these problems may be met.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of church nomination
2. Name of minister
3. Area the church serves
4. Number of young people ages 12-14
15-18
19-21
5. Building equipment:
Instructional; graded lessons International lessons
other
6. Do you have separate Sunday school classes for the above
ages? For each sex? How many in each class?
7. Recreational program and facilities:
8. Do you have a teacher training program?
9. Do you have classes of instruction for new church members?
10. Do you have a young people's choir? How many members?
11. What other organizations for young people does your church
have? How many in each?
12. Do you have a Vacation Bible School? Are there any
classes for children over 12 years of age?
13. Does the church support the Weekday religious education
program?
14. Which group is most active in your church?
What does it do for the church and community?
15. Are there any special problems relating to the program
for young people which you encounter in the church or
community?

Participation of Young People in Church Activities

Worship service

The young people of Virginia have been doing many things for their churches and taking part in many of the activities of the church. The most frequent participation has been in the worship service, not just as passive worshipers, but more important, as active participants. Many of the groups have planned and led worship services in their churches for special days of the year, Christmas, Easter, and Children's Day. In one church the young people conduct the service on the first Sunday of every month. By being participants, they are being guided into a fuller realization of the meaning of the worship service.

In the Central Baptist Church of Lowesville, Virginia, the young people, up to 21 years of age, are organized into two groups, Juniors and Intermediates, both of which comprise the "Church of Tomorrow". A captain and secretary are elected each year for each group. The Church of Tomorrow sits as a unit near the front of the congregation in each preaching service. The minister, Mr. D. S. Dempsey, wrote that they are

...used often in the regular services for choruses, special music, as ushers, taking the offering, reading scripture, leading the prayer, making announcements, etc. I promised them I would never

call upon them to do anything unless I knew they could do it well and they were never to say NO. I have never yet had one to refuse when I called upon them.

This plan has been adopted by other ministers and "it has put new life in their work and increased attendance." It has been recommended as a form of organization which will work in any church. The name, "Church of Tomorrow", is very appropriate to a group of young people in the church. It shows that the people are aware of the fact that the church is not static, but growing. Use of the young people wherever possible in the church of today provides training for the future church and assures the church of a continuous supply of active church members.

Fifty-six per cent of the churches reporting have choirs for young people. Two other churches reported that some of its young people were members of the senior choir and one planned to organize a choir in the near future. Due to the inadequacy of the questionnaire, it is not known, except in the two cases which so state, whether the young people are members of the senior choir where there is not one of their own. The churches could use their young people to greater advantage by organizing choirs for them and providing them with proper instruction and leadership. The young people are usually interested in singing. It is a good way to interest them in the church, and may tend to

increase the attendance of their parents.

The number of young people in the church is not a determining factor in the formation of a choir. Comparisons were made between the number of young people in the churches having youth choirs and those that did not. In the churches with such choirs, twenty-nine was the median. Thirty was the median in the churches without young people's choirs. Ten was the smallest number of young people in either group.

One group reported that its young people started and continued to publish the church bulletin. This is a worthwhile project for the young people of a church, providing opportunity for the exercise of various abilities and can be carried on by several of the young people cooperating together. They can also distribute the bulletins, not only in church but also personally to those members who were unable to attend and to prospective members. The purchase of a mimeograph for the church bulletin could be sponsored by the young people where none is available. Another method is to procure bulletins printed with the order of service and insert, by typing, the current hymns, scripture, sermon topic, and announcements.

In most churches the flowers to decorate the altar or platform are usually provided by the adults of the congregation. This is another service that can be done by the

young people as was reported by one of the churches.

Providing leadership

Young people are receiving leadership training in other ways than in taking part in worship services. In some churches they assist teachers in Sunday school and in Bible School. One church mentioned the fact that the young people were attending camps and assemblies for the purpose of preparing for leadership through training courses. The young people of another church sponsor the activities of younger groups. Some who are older have positions of leadership in the church and are officers in the church.

Church improvement

Some of the activities mentioned as means of beautifying and improving the church were providing flower baskets, providing carpet for the pulpit and the runner for the center aisle of the church, painting the church and sanding the floors. The young people of one church, at least, undertook to clean the church, as well as paint it. This group also provided new hymnals for the church. One group provided toys for the nursery class. Another specified keeping the church and lawn neat.

Financial assistance

It is usually the older young people who provide any financial assistance to a church. Those in high school often do not have money more than just enough for their expenses. This is usually given to them by their parents, although sometimes the high school young people work part time. Therefore the supplying of the church with material benefits, as the carpet, hymnals, etc., naturally come from those young people who are of working age. This does not mean that others cannot give financial help to the church, for the younger ones have demonstrated their abilities along this line also. The Crusaders, the smallest group of one Presbyterian church, has been most active in putting on a Fund Raising Campaign for the new Sunday school building that their church needs so badly. They have been collecting magazines and newspapers, too. The young people of another church canvassed for funds for Bible teachers in school. The young people of a Methodist church have undertaken the support of a Polish Methodist orphan.

Special projects

Other ways in which the young people have demonstrated their willingness to help their churches, have been the taking of the church census, the enlistment of new members, and the

providing of transportation for other members of the church. This last can, of course, be done by only the older group.

A few additional projects of interest were listed. One group of young people provide recreation and social programs for the church and for the community. Suppers were sponsored by another group. Dramas, minstrels, and plays were also mentioned. One group of young people send boxes to the college group which is away at school. This is especially noteworthy as an indication that the churches are keeping in contact with their young people who are away. Unless the churches show an interest in them, they may be lost to the church when they return. Other groups go on outings and trips. One mentioned was to the pageant, "Creation", at Natural Bridge.

Recreation

Although all churches do not have facilities for extensive recreation programs, most of these reporting have made an effort to have some type of recreation for the young people. Some of the churches have no indoor space for recreation but consider that they are fortunate to have so much space outdoors. These churches specialize in picnics and athletics such as softball and other games. One church is equipped with picnic grounds, croquet court, and shuffle board.

Churches which are not equipped with auditoriums or

recreation rooms make use of the parsonage and the homes of members for the parties and socials. One minister reported that the young people met in the homes one night a month for recreation, and occasionally after the Sunday night programs. A minister of another church without recreation facilities stated that the older youth groups of his church held play festivals and evening recreation programs on the lawn at the parsonage, following the programs with weiner roasts. In another church, the public school and playgrounds are utilized. The community hall and nearby beaches as well as the homes and parsonage are used by another church without facilities of its own.

Some churches consider themselves unfortunate because they have small outdoor space for recreation. But they have large halls and auditoriums. The really fortunate church has both. One church which uses the basement of the education building for recreation, is now in the process of building a small park with oven, lights, and other picnic facilities behind the church. Another church has a full time summer program of recreation for young people, beginning with a week of activities and continuing once a week through the summer. This church is meeting a vital need of young people, particularly of high school age, in this respect. The high school young people raise their own recreational funds. In some communities the young people of several churches have united

in groups or clubs for recreational purposes.

Sometimes no matter what the facilities or what the program planned, it does not meet with success, because of the attitude of the young people. One minister wrote, "We are quite frankly coming out second best in trying to compete with commercial recreation. For example, a hay-ride and picnic was planned, and fell through. Inquiring why, the preacher was told that 'we didn't want to go anyhow-- we just said we did because we thought you wanted us to'." Perhaps too much is being done for young people in some ways. If such activities are planned spontaneously by the group, they might be more successful.

Activities of Young People for the Community

Missions

Most mission projects were not specified as to content. Some churches mentioned merely help to the needy and welfare work. Clothing drives were mentioned, including drives for European people. One specific project mentioned was the providing and distributing of Christmas baskets.

Worship services

An important part of mission activities of young people is the holding of worship services in community institutions.

Most of these institutions do not have chaplains of their own and depend upon outside help in spiritual matters. If the young people are really in earnest in their desire to help others and to lead them to a knowledge of Christ, such meetings can be of immeasurable benefit both to those of the institutions and to the young people who lead the meetings. A couple of churches reported that services were held by the young people at the District Homes for the Indigent and for the Aged. Another group holds services at jails. The young people in one church gives moving pictures in the Negro church. This is an excellent means of improving race relations.

Financial aid

Not as much financial help was reported in connection with community activities as with those of the church. However some young people gave special offerings to sick and bereaved families. Others helped with the drive for a new hospital in a nearby city and another group helped with the Community Chest Drive.

Participation in community agencies.

Some of the community agencies which were mentioned as being participated in by the young people of the churches

were Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the Red Cross, the High School Band, and Tuberculosis Control. The young adults of one church were reported as taking part in the Parent-Teacher Association and the Eastern Star Lodge. The Intermediates of another church are participating in a movement to establish a Teen Canteen on a community basis.

Problems Cited by Ministers

A minister with a good sense of humor answered the question, "Are there any special problems relating to the program for young people which you encounter in the church or community?" in this way: "Nothing but problems, all of which might be labeled special." Then he elaborated on some of the problems of youth work. It does seem to be a work with no end to the problems.

Lack of interest of adults in young people

The foremost problem seems to be that the adults do not, as a whole, take an interest in the young people. They do not "see the importance of working with youth." "The main one is education of the older generation to youth work as such. For the past few years, the church has not seen the need of it, and now they resent the time that is spent

on the young people." "The older people are not in favor of programs which will attract young people, such as playgrounds and socials." These are a few of the ways in which ministers stated this most prevalent problem. Some adults actively oppose any work that is done for youth. And yet the adults say time and again that they "don't know what the younger generation is coming to." That sentence has probably been said throughout the ages. If the adults took more interest in the younger generation and planned with them, they would know what it was coming to.

One minister, whose Youth Fellowship consists of 39 members, wrote, "Only five of all the young people in this church have parents who are at all interested in the church. Over half come from broken or immoral homes. It amazes me more and more that we have any young people at all when I observe the behavior of the parents of this town".

A need for the education of youth in sex, marriage, and the alcohol problem was stated by one minister. This is definitely a sphere for adult interest and cooperation.

Another minister mentioned that adults are reluctant to share responsibilities with youth. That has been a problem in many places, in homes as well as churches. Adults need to be brought to the realization that they are responsible for the education of the younger generation and that part of this education is the preparation for all the

responsibilities of adult life, including sex and marriage. It seems that the first way that any problem of youth work can be met in a church is by educating the adult first, to enlist adult interest and cooperation. Then a church can be built in harmony of spirit and strength of union.

Lack of leadership

The second major problem in youth work is lack of leadership. This is almost a simultaneous problem with interest of adults, for if adults were interested, many of them would be in places of youth leadership in the churches. One minister writes that the special problem in youth work is "discovering the lay leadership to supervise and counsel with youth in such (vital) programs and projects. The church seems to be merely a Sunday matter with many rural youth simply because there has been a neglect of and an indifference toward any kind of an organized program for youth or adults."

However, some who are interested feel that they are not properly trained to take over positions of leadership. These people should be encouraged and given the opportunity to join the teacher training classes. If such classes are not held in their churches, they should be organized. Sixty per cent of the churches reported that they have such classes for teachers. These classes are not dependent upon the size of

the church. Adults should be encouraged to attend the conferences and assemblies which are held by the denominations at various times of the year, where they could receive help and inspiration in all phases of church work, but particularly those which would help them to work more effectively with their young people.

Adult education classes in churches, held during the hour for Bible class or at other times convenient for the adults, could specialize in leadership training, understanding of young people, methods of working with young people, and the like.

The minister is, of course, the most important leader in young people's work for he can encourage it or discourage it by his attitude and cooperation or lack of it. The problem has been stated by one minister, "Youth meetings do not seem to last very long in rural places unless the pastor is able to meet with the group. A tremendous amount of guidance is needed here and many lay people are not equipped to do the job that ought to be done and can be done with our young people."

The minister cannot do the work alone, but as the pivotal leader of the church, he can help the work tremendously. The ministers who have more than one church feel their inadequacy in respect to youth work very much. They would like to have

better programs but realize that their increased responsibilities are a handicap. Nineteen per cent of the ministers returning the questionnaires have two or more churches in their charge. This problem can be solved only when more ministers are available, salaries are increased, or churches are consolidated. In the meantime the ministers can encourage the adults of the church to take part in leadership training courses and to take over the supervision of the youth work.

Inadequate building and facilities for program

Many ministers cited the inadequacy of facilities as a drawback to a program for youth. Many of the churches are only one room structures. Only 44 per cent of the churches reporting have Sunday school buildings, ranging in size from one room to seventeen room structures. One church uses the homes and Community Hall, and others use the public school buildings. Five churches are planning on building in the near future. Two are under construction now.

Although the lack of equipment is a serious deterrent, many churches have taken it in their stride and the young people seem to be as active as in churches with better facilities. This might indicate that the trouble is not with the plant but with the use of it. Consolidation of churches has been mentioned previously. It is one way in which larger

plants, better facilities, and better trained leaders would be available.

One minister mentioned the need for a supervised center for boys and girls. Although this was not mentioned specifically by others, it has been considered a need in many communities. The interest of adults is a prerequisite for this, too, for the adults must furnish the space, the finances, and the supervision. Such a worthwhile enterprise could be planned and supervised by adult education classes. School and church facilities could be used.

The need for recreational equipment was stated by several ministers. Ways in which this lack has been met by churches has been dealt with in the section on recreation. This is another problem which can be met by the interest of adults.

Transportation

Another major problem in rural churches is transportation. It is hard to find ways of getting people to church in the country because so many families have no automobiles and live so far from the churches. This makes young people's work particularly difficult. It hinders weekday activities because many parents find it hard, if they do have cars, to leave their work in order to take the children to church. The problem is less severe for young people who are old enough

to have their own cars.

Some churches have met the transportation problem by renting a bus. One church is hoping to buy a bus of its own. The young adults of another church help solve the problem by volunteering to transport members in their cars. The purchase of a church bus, if this can be financed, seems to be the best solution to the problem, for then it can be used by various departments or organizations of the church for its numerous functions.

One minister in charge of six churches does not believe that transportation is a great handicap, for, he says, "people can usually find a way to get wherever they really want to go." This revolves the problem back to that of interest.

Young people

In places where there are not enough young people in one church to carry on a vital, interesting and active program, as in each of five churches in the charge of one minister, it might be possible to cooperate with young people of churches of other denominations if they are conveniently situated. Some churches have met the problem by forming Interdenominational Fellowships.

The difficulty of getting young people to accept responsibility (in churches where the adults are willing to give it)

and carry it through to completion, can be overcome by interesting and training the young people in the work of the church. An important principle to be governed by is that of giving small responsibilities that can be successfully accomplished before giving more difficult work. The interest of the young people will grow with their ability.

Training courses should be offered whenever possible in the rural churches, even for small numbers of young people. When the young people know how things should be done, they are more willing to take part.

About 32 per cent of the churches reporting do not have classes for instructing new members of their churches, although some of the ministers try to give such instruction through sermons and personal visits. Classes of instruction to new church members, particularly those who are included in the young people's department of a church, should be given in order for the young people to understand the church, its work and its purposes. They should be more stimulated to participate when they understand its functions. This instruction and training would also help to make them more willing to give the time that is needed to prepare their programs properly. They need to be interested in it before they will give it their time. They need to see the value of their programs.

The "graduation" of members from one group to another

in a church is a drawback, but only a temporary one. It causes the work and interest to lag for a while if those who go into the next group are the leaders. It is therefore necessary to insure the steady operation of a group by trying to maintain a steady influx and exodus of members. That is, it is better to have some move each year if possible, than to move as a group. By spreading the work among all the members and training all of them in some phase of the group activities, those who remain in a group will be better able to carry on and lead new members. Closer cooperation and fellowship between groups will also help to make the change less evident.

Programs offered

All the churches have Sunday school. Some of them have no other organization for the young people. Those that do, often have organizations which do not necessarily follow denominational forms, but are designed to meet their own needs. One church has tried several types of groups for young people, but all have failed because of the lack of leaders. The Baptist organizations of B.T.U. and W.M.U. auxiliaries are maintained in some churches, but only one mentioned specifically the B.T.U. and two a W.M.U. auxiliary as the most active young people's group. The other churches either have

specially organized groups, as the Sunday Night Club of the Glen Allen Baptist Church, or the activities are carried on by the Sunday school groups. The Youth Fellowship is the most active organization in both the Methodist and the Presbyterian denominations. Some churches in these denominations, too, have no other organization than the Sunday school. Yet the young people of these churches are serving the church in as many ways as are the young people in other organized groups. The Pioneers (aged 10-14) and Crusaders were also mentioned in the Presbyterian denomination.

All but one of the churches has Vacation Bible School. Only three of these churches do not have classes for children over twelve years of age. The classes are usually for Intermediates, though one church specified a class for adults.

One of the pastors noted that his church did "not find it advantageous to take the same people and organize them several times." There is just one organization for young people in that church - the one that starts things, "movements that result in improvement to church property" and "has sponsored several good community enterprises, such as the showing of religious movies, the holding of lawn parties."

Others, too, have mentioned divided activities as a problem. Too many organizations cause the young people to divide their loyalties. One organization, particularly in a

rural church which does not have a great many young people, would seem to be the most sensible arrangement. A council to integrate the program could be formed.

More will be said about this in the program to be offered later in this paper. Less pressure from denominations for the organizing of various groups in order to meet certain standards would simplify matters for many rural churches. Denominations could give more help to rural churches by offering plans of simple organizations and programs to meet the needs of rural youth.

Denominational programs do not always meet the needs of the rural churches. This is as true of auxiliary organizations as it is of the Sunday school. Many of the programs and much literature seem to be designed more for city churches than for rural.

The securing of suitable literature is a problem in some churches. The denominational literature does not always meet the needs of the groups. One minister said that the fault might be in the way they were used in his church and because of the age span they had to cover. But proper literature should be available to meet such conditions. This may be secured by consulting catalogues and bulletins published by the major denominations, or by the International Council of Religious Education.

Both International and Graded lessons are used by the Sunday schools. Forty per cent of the churches reporting use both types of lessons. Usually the graded lessons are used up to and often through the Junior departments, while the International lessons are used in the upper departments. In 33 per cent of the churches only International lessons were used, while in 27 per cent only graded lessons are used. Reports on literature for other organizations were not requested.

It would be helpful if the leaders of the churches examined literature provided by all the denominations and by other organizations as the International Council of Religious Education. There would be some which would be suitable for them or which they could adapt more easily to their programs.

Chapter III

THE SITUATION AT TAYLORSVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH

The Community

Taylorsville, the site of the Baptist church

In early years the travel between Washington and Richmond was by coach on a narrow, winding road, wide enough for one vehicle. At Taylorsville is a chimney, all that remains of the tavern that once was a coach stop on this old route. This road, now practically impassable, goes by the grounds which belong to the Taylorsville Baptist church and parsonage. This church was organized in 1841. The present brick structure was built in 1856.

Until about seven years ago, there was a train stop at Taylorsville. It was a thriving town. About five houses besides the church and parsonage now comprise the immediate neighborhood. The post office and store have long since disappeared. The railroad station has been removed also.

When the present wide highway, U.S. Route 1, was cut through, it did not follow the old route through Taylorsville, but by-passed it by more than one-half mile. All available unused land in the vicinity has been bought up by a resident of the next neighborhood, Doswell, as an investment for future use in his lumber mill. Should anyone wish to buy land on which to live, and build up the community, he could not do it. This is one cause of the lack of spirit in the community.

Doswell - town and community

Taylorsville, which once was larger than Doswell, is now part of Doswell community. In this case the community is determined by the location of the post office, in the town of Doswell, two miles from Taylorsville, and one-fourth mile east of the main highway. The junction of the R.F.&P. railroad and the C.&O. railroad at Doswell has been a reason for its growth. Although passenger trains stop only twice a day, the town is important as a freight junction.

There are two stores in Doswell. A part of one is the post office. Doswell also boasts a branch of the Tri-County Bank. These all are located near the railroads which run through the center of the town. There are several houses in the immediate neighborhood of the railroad. The rest of the

population is scattered over an area of about 10 square miles, some houses being on Route 1, others off on county and private roads which are almost impassable in winter and rainy weather. There are several garages, a lumber mill, and an excelsior mill in Doswell.

There does not seem to be much civic interest. Much of the land and the homes belong to two families in Doswell. One of these families owns the lumber mill. The town could be lovely, with its houses and stores painted and its lawns kept beautifully. However, the few which are painted and well landscaped contrast strongly with the others which are neglected. Few of the tenants seem to care about beautifying the homes which they have rented for many years. The owners have not done much in the way of modernizing some of the houses. In one case at least, the tenants have been carrying their water about 1,000 feet from across the road to their house for the past twenty-five years. The owner of this house is one who owns most of the tenant property in Doswell and is a member of Taylorsville church.

Much of the population of Doswell, colored and white, is employed by the two mills and the railroad. A few own or work in the garages. A few are farmers. The majority of the rest of the people travel each day by Greyhound bus or private automobile into Ashland, 8 miles away, or to Richmond, 25 miles away, to work there. A few travel by train.

Until four years ago there was an Episcopal church attended by about 25 people in the town of Doswell. The church burned to the ground. A sum of money has been left by will to rebuild the church, but cannot be used for any other purpose. There is no need for the church. It is unfortunate that the money cannot be used for a community building which is really needed.

Community agencies

The Doswell school, located on Route 1, has two teachers who teach the first six grades. One of the teachers is also principal. A bus runs to take the children to school. Those in upper grades and high school are taken by bus to Henry Clay High School in Ashland.

The Parent-Teachers Association is the most active organization in the community. It sponsors projects for the benefit of the school and community. Occasionally it provides entertainments as a means of raising money for school expenses.

The Doswell Woman's Club of forty members from various neighborhoods over an area of about 60 square miles, also undertakes an occasional community project, but there are many community needs which are not met by the Woman's Club.

The Home Demonstration Bureau meets once a month at the school. This would be of great benefit to the community if

the people would take advantage of its offerings. Unfortunately the ones who attend it are not the ones who need it most.

There are no other organizations directly connected with the community. Some of the men of the community belong to the Masons and the Kiwanis Club, both of which meet in Ashland.

There is a Woman's Bridge Club of twelve members. The only community recreation is the baseball game which is played at the Doswell school. For all other recreation the people must go to Ashland or Richmond.

There are no organizations other than the few connected with the church for the young people. A few of the young people belong to the Scouts and to the 4-H Club, which meet in Ashland.

The Church

Co-operation with other churches

There are now two churches in the community - Mt. Hope Methodist and Taylorsville Baptist, separated by about five miles. The Methodist church is more poorly located than the Baptist church. Some of its members attend Taylorsville because it is more convenient. A bus is provided for transportation to Taylorsville every Sunday and during revivals and Daily Vacation Bible School. There is no active cooperation

between the churches, nor is there any rivalry. It would be better for both if the Baptist church, with its better facilities and full time services, were a Community Church. The membership at the Methodist church is small, and services are held twice a month. Members of both churches attend the annual revival services in each church, and the children of the community attend the Daily Vacation Bible Schools of both churches, since they are held at different times. The children like having two schools. However if they were held co-operatively, the same combined length of time could be used. Better materials and leadership might be provided at less expense to both churches.

The church does not yet actively co-operate with the Hanover Council of Churches by sending representatives to the meetings. The church has supported the Weekday Religious Education program which is sponsored by the Council, by providing financial help for the support of the teacher. Doswell community, however, is not supporting the Religious Education program this year. The P.T.A. voted not to have the classes held in the school this year. There was only one parent in favor of the program.

Location

As was stated previously the church is six-tenths of a

mile off the main highway, on a county road. This is icy in winter, and gets deep muddy ruts in rainy spells. The highway department is working on the road more now than previously, smoothing it and widening it slightly so that two cars may pass safely. This poor road has been the most used excuse for lack of attendance in the winter.

The church is about centrally located for the majority of its members.

Equipment

Taylorsville Baptist church is a brick building of the meeting-house type of architecture which seems to be typically Southern. It has a seating capacity of about 250. A two-story Sunday school building is attached. This has 14 rooms and suitable furnishings (chairs, tables, blackboards) for most of the rooms, including the beginners' department. The beginners' and Junior departments both have pianos. The Sunday school building and church are electrified, except for the second floor which has light in only the hall and the Junior assembly room. Six rooms are unelectrified.

The Sunday school building is heated by a hot air furnace in the basement, the register of which is in the hall. This furnace is large enough to furnish heat for the whole church if the proper system were put in. However the upstairs Sunday school rooms and the church auditorium are cold in winter, and

must be heated as well as possible by a small wood stove in one of the rooms. The church auditorium is heated by two coal stoves. There is an electric heater in the Women's Bible class on the first floor. In the winter one of the church members loaned the church a huge fan blower which is placed over the hot air register on the first floor to blow the air through the church. This does help to distribute the air but must be done before church begins as it is very noisy.

The kitchen in the basement is a suitable size for the church and has a new coal range for cooking, bought by the W.M.U. this year. The water system is poor, however, the water merely being drained outside the kitchen rather than being properly drained away from the building.

The walls of the basement need waterproofing. Many repairs are needed in the church and Sunday school building. The church ceiling is cracking and needs re-plastering. The original plaster is on the ceiling. The walls need reinforcing. The drains need replacing. In rainy weather the water from the roof of the church pours down between the church and Sunday school building and seeps into the walls of the Sunday school building. The cement becomes wet and is now cracking. The whole building needs repainting also.

There are no lavatories in the church building, although the Sunday school building is a fairly new addition, having

been built in 1935.

There is a medium sized room in the basement, in which the furnace is situated, where the Woman's Missionary Union monthly dinners are held and where any socials which may be provided are held. However it is not large enough for the membership of the church, seating only about forty comfortably for any sort of dinner or entertainment.

The parsonage is an eight-room-and-bath building without central heating but is electrified. There is no basement and no foundation which would help to keep the house warmer in winter. There is a coal stove in the kitchen for cooking and heating, an oil burner in the living room, wood stoves in the study and in two bedrooms upstairs.

It is doubtful whether anything will ever be done about the heating systems in church or parsonage, because most of the members of the church have the same kind of heating in their homes - several wood stoves throughout the house which must be tended every hour or so all day. Many who could easily afford more convenient systems have done it this way for many, many years. Although there are complaints about how much work it is, people seldom change to something new and convenient. It is hoped, though, that when prices are reasonable, the people will decide to provide better heating in the church. This will help winter attendance immensely.

Financial support

Taylorsville Church is operating "in the red". A year and a half ago, the church voted to adopt the envelope system in an effort to have a steadier and more certain income. The duplex envelope system was used, one half being for church operating expenses, the other for the building fund, which would be used in the future for necessary improvements and upkeep of the church. This year the envelopes have been for only church expenses.

The Sunday school has started a treasury of its own. This has not diminished the church income appreciably and has enabled the Sunday school to operate as successfully as before. Not many of the children give to both Sunday school and church.

The envelope system has not been successful. The members who come irregularly do not use the envelopes except on the Sundays they attend. Therefore the purpose of the system is defeated.

Although a budget of \$3,000 was decided upon at the beginning of the year, it is not met by the income of the church. The salary of the minister is \$1,500 a year and parsonage. The other large expenses are for missions, bus transportation, janitor, insurance, and coal.

No form of money-making undertakings, such as suppers or plays, are approved or sponsored by the church. The

church does not at present have money for anything beyond running expenses. In fact it does not have enough to run on. The church continues to give one-quarter of its income to the Cooperative Program, although there is some opposition to this.

The majority of the people do not tithe. If they did, the church would be prosperous, for there are many people in it who are financially fortunate. Sermons, Sunday school lessons, W.M.U. talks on Stewardship and Tithing have no effect. The giving of talents and of time by those who are not able to give financially has been stressed but this has been to no avail either.

More education concerning the expenses of the church and the meaning and value of the Cooperative Program is needed, as is a greater appeal to unselfishness, so that the church may meet and surpass its obligations. The people need to be awakened spiritually and have their hearts opened so that they will open their pocket books. The church and community as a whole (with the exception of the faithful few) seem to be selfish to the core - with money, talents, and time for the Lord.

Standards

There has been a great effort on the part of the church

to meet the standards of organization set up by the Baptist denomination. At times some of the leaders of the church were so interested in meeting these standards that they did not realize how poorly they were meeting Christ's standards. Sometimes reports have not been accurate, as in the average attendance at church or organization meetings.

Taylorsville church is competing with city churches in Dover association. Neither Taylorsville nor any other rural church in any association should be expected to so compete. As an illustration, Taylorsville has been asked to provide money to send city girls to Y.W.A. camp, yet it cannot afford to send any of its own.

In order to keep the good standing the church has had in the eyes of the denominational board in previous years, some of the leaders have not been careful about keeping the reports accurate. In trying to reach man's standards, the leaders are forgetting God's standards of honesty in representing the facts. To some extent this tendency is being overcome. The church needs to remember that standards are made for the church's good, not the church for the standards.

The standards set by the denomination may be met by city churches but are impossible of attainment by most rural churches. Separate standards should be made for rural churches with gradations of attainment. That is, the churches should

be classed according to size, membership and financial support and then be given standards to meet. When impossibly high standards are set, whether for an individual or an organization, either discouragement sets in or an attempt is made to reach the standard unfairly.

Membership

The membership on roll is 277, but the average attendance is about 50. The membership is drawn from an area of about 30 square miles. Many of the members have moved into Ashland or Richmond or other places without removing their membership. However most of the people are within traveling distance of the church but are not interested in coming. Although the bus is provided it is not made use of by more than a handful of people.

There are many reasons for this lack of attendance. The poor conditions of the roads in bad weather is merely an excuse. The lack of community spirit, previously mentioned, is reflected in the church. The increasing amount of young people who go to Richmond to work and live there is another factor. But the three largest factors are the ones most pertinent in any church - the minister, the lay leaders and the program they provide.

Leadership

Characteristics of people of the community

It is hard to know whether to consider first the minister or the leaders. But one cannot understand the problems of the minister, without first understanding those who choose him and work with him. One cannot consider a church without the personal element, for the church, although it strives to be a unity, is a congregation of individuals. In a rural community, individualism is predominant. It overshadows and overcomes most efforts at cooperation. Yet contrasted with this characteristic of individualism is that of dependency and lack of initiative.

Both of these characteristics are found in Taylorsville church. There are two groups of people, taken at large. The first is in the minority, yet they are the leaders with initiative - the individualists. They are the ones who are independent in their forms of occupation - owning their own business, employing others to work for them, or working in more or less executive positions other than in Doswell. The second, larger group is composed of those who work for others, in the mills, on farms or the railroad, or in large businesses where they are relatively unimportant. Therefore, in this respect at least, Taylorsville has the problems of an

industrial community, rather than of the agricultural community.

Lay Leaders

The leaders, teachers and deacons are elected each year by the congregation. Usually the same ones are elected year after year. They are willing and others are not. Also their feelings might be hurt if they were replaced. It is extremely difficult to get new leaders. Very few are trained and no training is provided. Except for the minority group which has initiative and seems to decide everything for the church, there are few who will undertake anything new. Many of them take the attitude that no one will support the effort anyway.

The people of the congregation range from the uneducated to those who have been educated as teachers. Of the twelve Sunday school teachers, five have had college education or its equivalent. Few of them have taken any training classes. The percentage of educated deacons is less than the teachers. Most have finished high school. The ones who are willing to work and give of their time are not always the ones who are educated or trained. Although their efforts are greatly appreciated, their lack of education is often a hindrance. Without them, however, much would be left undone, for many who are able to lead are unwilling. It is under-

standable that those who realize their lack of ability and training hesitate to take part in or lead church activities. It is unfortunate for the church that those who are capable often refuse to take responsibility in church affairs.

Since there are so few leaders in the church, they have too much to do. Those who are capable and willing are asked to do more than they should. They are not able to refuse to do what is asked but are unable, with such a load, to do their best in any one field. Some are unwilling to give over some of their work to others who might do it more capably. Others who are capable hesitate to become leaders or teachers because of their feelings of inferiority.

Encouragement has been given by the minister to those who could be capable leaders. They have been encouraged to read books and materials which have been given and loaned to them. An effort has been made to bring the younger people into positions of leadership. But not enough training has been available.

There is a great need for trained, willing, educated leaders. The greatest need is for children's and young people's leaders, for if the children are lost to the church through lack of interest and lack of effort on the part of the adults, Taylorsville Baptist Church will cease to exist in a few years.

The minister

The minister, although ordained and desirous of conducting a full time church, was a student at the University of Richmond for the first year and a half of his stay at Taylorsville. This was a great handicap, for it meant that his time was divided between two tasks, both of which demanded full time application. In consequence, the program of the church, which he hoped would start the church on an upward trend of service and spirituality, was all but defeated at the onset. A full program demands full leadership. The leaders of the church were not understanding enough, trained or capable enough to carry the program through without more constant, enthusiastic leadership. The leaders on the whole were willing to try to support any program the minister suggested, but were unable to carry it through by themselves.

The minister feels now, after a better understanding of the community and the members of the church, that a different sort of program, with more emphasis on the community and on the adults of the church, rather than just the young people, would have been wiser and would have had fuller support and cooperation of the leaders.

The programs he initiated through the Sunday school superintendent and the Y.W.A. leaders were directed to provide recreation and training for the young people. But the

adults of the church objected because everything seemed to be done for the young people and nothing for them. According to the minutes, when the minister "gave a detailed outline of the program he had planned for the young people", the vote was taken and was unanimous in supporting the minister in his work. The program lasted two months before the adults objected. The training program, which involved the conducting of the Sunday school worship service by a different class each Sunday, was terminated because of lack of proper class leadership and understanding of the purpose and value of the program.

Although the minister lived at the parsonage for most of his tenure, he found it difficult to visit the congregation as often as he would have liked because of the necessity of travelling 25 miles each way to school and the length of time necessary to be spent in school and in preparation for school studies and activities. This was known by the congregation before the minister was called to the church, but later was not taken into consideration.

More constant, church-wide visiting would help the minister to explain the needs of various departments of the church to the members, would help the minister to understand his parishoners better, and through mutual understanding and respect, gain their cooperation in the carrying out of the church program. For these reasons alone it is wiser for a church to

have a minister who can give full time to the church.

The minister of Taylorsville had received his education at Bob Jones Bible University and the University of Richmond. Before coming to Taylorsville he had had much experience in young people's work and had served as assistant pastor in two churches. He is committed to the Christian message and is a strongly evangelistic preacher. After two years of service and experience at Taylorsville he has left to attend Southwestern Baptist Seminary for further training.

Among his other attributes is that of being a good business manager. His plans for stabilizing the financial situation of the church were sound, but as noticed in the section on Finance, did not receive the cooperation of the people. These plans, too, might be carried to successful fruition through the efforts of full time leadership.

The Church Program

Preaching service

The preaching service is the most important part of the church program in the eyes of most of the people. It is the sermon that determines the success of the minister in many rural churches. And that holds true in Taylorsville, too, to a large extent.

The attitude of the majority of the people in the community who attend the church does not seem to be worshipful. They seem to come to church to hear and judge the sermon more than for any other reason. This is evidenced also by the large attendance at the annual revival services, when the church is well filled with people who never attend any other services until the next revival meeting.

The fact that the Sunday school convenes in the church auditorium at the close of the Sunday school hour for a song and announcements may be a cause of the lack of feeling of worship in the church. There is usually talking as the congregation gathers in the church.

The minister, in trying to attain an atmosphere of worship in the church, requested that the organist play a short prelude before the opening of the church service. This has been done with the desired effect of preparing the congregation for the service. However, there are some people who continue to talk through prelude, prayer, and preaching. This is distracting to congregation and minister. So far there seems to be nothing that can be done to correct this situation.

There has often been no connection between the music of the service and the theme of the minister's Scripture and sermon, for the choir leader usually chose the music without reference to the minister. Occasionally the minister selected

hymns in keeping with his theme. Then there seemed to be more continuity in the thought of the service.

The choir sings almost always without rehearsal. The choir leader tries to have a short rehearsal of the offertory hymn for the next Sunday right after the benediction. This is not satisfactory but is better than no rehearsal. Attempts were made at having choir rehearsals during the week but these were not attended by more than a couple of people. When mid-week prayer meetings were conducted, choir rehearsals were held immediately following them. As the meetings were poorly attended, so were rehearsals.

The choir is usually composed of about 8 to 10 members. There are several unusually good voices in the choir, but those who have not had training are shy about singing. When the Intermediate girls feel cooperative, they sit on the opposite side of the platform and join the senior choir in singing. At these times the pianist, an Intermediate girl, plays in unison with the organist. Whether or not the untrained choirs add to the worshipful atmosphere is debatable. But they are valuable in two ways. One is that the choir leads the congregation in singing. The second is that it provides an opportunity for the young people of the church to serve by singing and by playing the piano for accompaniment. It is valuable as a means of helping the young people overcome

their extreme shyness at being before people. This value would be greatly increased if the choirs would practice the music more diligently, for then they would feel confident. Then, too, a valuable contribution would be made to the worship service.

The prayers have been very effective in contributing to the feeling of worship. The prayers of the minister almost always caused one to feel that he was led directly to God's presence. If at no other time in the service the congregation felt united, they could not feel otherwise during prayer.

The sermons were delivered as well and as beautifully as the prayers at most times. The point in greatest favor of the minister's sermons has been his continual, clear presentation of the need for salvation through Jesus Christ and for commitment to his service. For it any people as a community need consecration to the living Saviour, it is Taylorsville.

Mid-week Prayer meetings

Prayer meetings have been held at two or three periods during the past two years in an attempt to develop this side of the people's religious lives. The minister had been told that they would not be successful, as people did not wish a mid-week meeting. This was found to be true after several attempts at different kinds of meetings. Question and answer

forums were tried but did not work. People were either too timid to ask questions or did not care. Prayer meetings on topics usually of special interest to young people, as Friendship, Courtship, Marriage, and Family Relations were tried. The young people for whom they were meant did not even attend. In another series of meetings different phases of Christian doctrine were discussed. This proved to bring the best response, again from the older people of the church.

Moving pictures

Moving pictures were offered on Wednesday nights as a means of religious and general instruction and inspiration. They were, almost without exception, paid for by the minister. At the showing of one picture, The King of Kings, free will offerings were left in one of the plates to help defray the high cost of the film. The attendance at most of the moving pictures was much poorer than expected. Some of the explanations offered for this were lack of transportation, the fact that the pictures did not cost the people anything and therefore were not valued by them, and the possible fact that the intelligence of the majority of the people in the community is not quite up to the level that would appreciate the religious and educational films. Purely recreational films were not offered.

Sunday school

The Sunday school seems to be considered by some as more important than the church worship service, for when some of the members objected to the pastor's sermons, they came to Sunday school and then left, taking their children with them, before the church service. Usually almost all of those who attend Sunday school, except the nursery children, stay for church service. There are 193 members on roll. The average attendance is about 50. The Sunday school is organized according to standards, with the Beginners department, Junior, Intermediate, Young People's, and Adult departments. In most cases there are only one or two classes for each department. There is only one Intermediate class--girls. The Intermediate boys meet with the young men's class because no teacher is available for them. The young men's class does not have a steady teacher.

There are four teachers and four classes for seventeen children in the Junior department. The minister suggested that these classes be combined so that there would be one or two larger classes. The plan was objected to by the superintendent of the Junior department on the grounds that it would hurt the standing of the Sunday school and the fact that these classes are necessary to put across the program according to standards. Graded lessons are used up to and

through the Junior department. However other lessons could be provided for larger classes. Two of the teachers could be used for other classes.

The International quarterlies are used in the departments above the Juniors. These quarterlies could be helpful if the teachers were educated to use them properly. The lack of a teacher training program and monthly teacher meetings is a definite drawback to the Sunday school. In most classes the quarterlies are read by paragraphs either by the teacher or by the young people.

There are four classes in the Beginner and Primary departments. The Beginners' department seems to be the best organized and most properly functioning. Handwork is provided for the children. The story method and question and answer method is used in the Primary and Junior departments.

In the Intermediate girls' class various teaching methods have been used, including question and answer, discussion, lecture, and occasionally a story. Quite often lessons other than those in the quarterlies are provided to meet the needs and interests of the girls. The older classes would like to have more varied lessons but do not know how to suggest it to the teachers who have not had opportunity for specific teacher training. They are losing members for lack of interest.

There is a need for more teachers as well as for trained teachers so that classes might be rearranged. It is difficult

and not very satisfactory to teach specific lessons to a group in which the age range is so great. Not only are the interests and needs of the ages different, but their personal response to the class differs with age. Different methods of teaching must be used for various age groups.

The lecture method is used in the adult classes. Although the teachers of both the men's and women's Bible classes are very capable, trained and interesting to their classes, the adults might find it more stimulating to have discussions occasionally. Some discussion is carried on in both classes but the same few do all the talking. The discussion method would have to be tried with care and patience because the people are not used to doing anything except sitting back and having the material fed to them.

One class of doctrinal instruction was provided for the people of the church. It was taught every night for a week by a capable teacher. The workers of the church were especially urged to attend, but as in all other undertakings of the church the attendance was very poor. It did not seem worthwhile to start another, although those few who did attend were benefitted and expressed interest in having more classes.

The teacher of the men's Bible class was sent to a state Sunday school workers' conference for a week. He received inspiration from this and came back with ideas for the improvement of the Sunday school. Lack of cooperation from the

other workers in the church resulted in no changes whatsoever in the program of the Sunday school.

The opening worship service of the Sunday school is held in the church auditorium for the Intermediate, Young People, and Adult departments. But it is not conducive to worship. There is a song, prayer, another song, and responsive reading of the Scripture lesson before the "teachers go to the classes". It seems to many to be uninteresting and useless. The time could be spent more profitably in class worship periods, or would be more valuable if the few minutes were planned in order to bring about a feeling of worship. The unsuccessful attempt to have the classes prepare the worship service for the assembly has been mentioned already. Most of the classes have Scripture reading and prayer again in the classrooms after the "devotional" in the auditorium. This seems to be a needless repetition except that it offers opportunity for training the young people.

Women's Missionary Union

The other "fully organized" institution in Taylorsville is the W.M.U. with its young people's auxiliaries. This is organized in name only, for some of the auxiliaries, namely the Junior and Intermediate R.A.'s and G.A.'s are not all functioning properly. The Junior R.A.'s meet for a few minutes between Sunday school and church once a month. This is

considered as a meeting although the purpose of the R.A.'s does not seem to be met at all in this manner. An attempt has been made, not too successfully, to have the Juniors and Intermediates meet at one time at the church on Sunday evenings. This is the best solution in our church if the W.M.U. auxiliaries are kept functioning but needs to be pushed more and organized better so that all groups will work cooperatively and effectively.

The Y.W.A. is the most active of the young people's auxiliaries, meeting twice a month in the homes of the members. They do not stick too closely to the literature provided by the denomination. They have meetings based on the needs and interests of the girls and try also to meet the requirements of the organization. They are more active than any other auxiliary in mission activity. They also provide special church services a couple of times a year.

Attempts have been made by the Intermediate G. A. leader to have vital programs of mission study, Bible study, discussion, and recreation. Although these meetings were interesting to some of the girls, attendance was poor, the leader became discouraged, and when other work was pressing, neglected to prepare and provide for more of such meetings. Not enough leadership training is being given in these organizations to supplement and aid the leaders. The leaders would find the work easier and less discouraging if they trained their young

people to take more part in the program planning as well as in its execution.

The W.M.S. meets regularly each month at the church for circle meetings, lunch and mission study. It is fairly active in its community mission work and in its work for the organizations supported by the Baptist denomination. Its monthly programs are sometimes repetitious and uninteresting. A few of the women present good programs but the majority merely read the literature to the group.

One of the great problems in the young people's work is the lack of connection between the programs of the Sunday school and those of the W.M.S. and its auxiliaries. The Sunday school meets merely to study the lesson quarterlies. The auxiliaries of the W.M.U. meet to read the articles in the monthly mission magazines. The young people, especially, feel as if they have two disjointed organizations, that missions have no connection with Sunday school and sometimes no connection with the church. Some think that the W.M.S. separates itself from the church, for many of its members, though church members, do not attend Sunday services. This may be an unconscious separation on the part of the young people, but it is one which should be recognized and remedied by the leaders.

Recreation

There is no organized program of recreation in the church. The annual Sunday school picnic is the only congregational fellowship activity.

An attempt was made, as has been mentioned, to have monthly socials for the young people of the church. The adults resented their omission from the program. Money was not available for the carrying out of the program and it was abandoned. The socials were successful from the fellowship angle, but were not carried on long enough.

Individual class parties have been held by the Intermediate and Young ladies classes, to which the Intermediate boys and young men, respectively, were invited. These were also successful undertakings, providing opportunities for fun and fellowship and for training in planning an event and executing the plans. More recreation is needed by all groups. They do not have any parties in the community. The social training thus received is also beneficial.

A pageant is given in the Christmas season. A large number of the active members of the church and Sunday school are willing to take part in the acting and production of the pageant. But this, too, needs stronger leadership--a leader who knows how to delegate work to various members and secure their cooperation. If such a willing leader could be found,

more plays and pageants could be given, for many have said they would like more. The problem of transportation is one which hinders the preparation of plays and pageants as well as most other functions of the church.

Summary of the major problems of the church

There is very little community spirit. The church reflects this lack, by the lethargy, lack of interest, and lack of cooperation of its members. There is little cooperation with the few available community agencies or with the other churches in the community and county. The members do not feel the need of giving to the church for its work in spreading the gospel of Christ. There is too much emphasis on meeting "standards" which do not meet the needs of the church. The example of Christian living by professing Christians is not always as worthy as it should be. The greatest lack is that of the greatest quality--love.

The church needs more leaders, especially those who are interested in the young people. Training for these leaders should be made available.

There is a great need for an integrated program which will meet the needs of the church, its members, and the community, a program which includes recreation for the young people of the community.

Chapter IV

PROGRAM FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF TAYLORSVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH

Adult Co-operation

Although religious education seems to be primarily concerned with teaching children and young people, it becomes increasingly evident that it must first concern itself with the adults of the church. They are the ones who teach the children, in the homes, in the church, and in the community. They must be shown the importance of proper values and be given a desire to love and serve Christ, if they are to teach their children these principles. The church and the home need to work together for their mutual benefit.

The Minister

In order to have an effective program for young people, Taylorsville church needs a full time resident minister, with good leadership ability. The needs are not different from any other church, but are restated for emphasis. He should be a man of tact, able to mix with people and to make personal

visits with them in their homes. He must be able to understand the people and their problems, to become one of them, gain their respect, confidence and co-operation. Most of all he must be an evangelical minister, instilling the love of God in the hearts of the members. He can be a motivating force in uniting the church and community by taking an active part in community affairs.

Enlistment of leaders

By canvass of the members, in files, records, minutes, and by personal visits, the minister can know the leadership that is available in the church. He, as pivotal leader in the church, must interest those who are qualified by leadership ability and a strong love for Christ and for the young people, and suggest them for positions of leadership.

Adult education

Through his sermons the minister may present to a large number of adults the needs of the young people for better religious training. Their education can go further than this, into the Adult Bible class and discussion groups.

In the formation of a new program for the young people, changes must also be made in other portions of the church program. It would be wise to join the Men's Bible class and the Women's Bible class into one Adult Bible class under the

present teacher of the men's class. Among other advantages, this makes available another excellent teacher for another class. This may be the training class for adults who have been elected as leaders and others who are interested in young people's work. The training class may undertake several courses. From time to time, as the need or interest arises, teacher training classes, courses in leadership, understanding children and young people, methods of young people's work, program planning, and recreational planning may be taught.

Transportation

There are two ways that this problem may be met in Taylorsville. The first is to get a list of members with cars, who are willing to use them to transport the young people. Adjustments in program schedules may be made accordingly. The second way is harder, for it involves finances. Arrangements can be made for the bus which is provided for transportation Sunday mornings to be rented for the meetings of the young people on Sunday night and during the week. In its present condition, the church is unable to purchase a bus of its own.

Finances

Education concerning the financial obligations of the church and the financial duties of its members should be continued. This can be done through the sermon, in the Adult

Bible class, and in the Young People's class as well as in the Women's Missionary Society. The practise of tithing can be taught to the children, also. Another "Every Member Canvass" can be made. The budget should be planned with young people's work in mind. When the envelopes are available at the beginning of the year, they should be distributed by the deacons to every member of the church.

The Educational Council

Composition

At a business meeting of the church the Educational Council will be formed to study the religious education program of the church and plan for an improved program. This board will include the minister, the Sunday school superintendent, the president of the Women's Missionary Society, the Sunday school teachers, the chairman of the Board of Deacons, representatives of the Sunday school classes including, and above, the Intermediate department, two parents, and all leaders who have been enlisted to work with the new program. One member of the council will be elected as chairman.

Council meetings

The council will meet on the first Saturday after school closes in June to plan the yearly program. Quarterly meetings will be held during the year to make revisions in the plans. These should be held during the week before the quarterly con-

gregational business meeting so that reports may be made to the congregation and any necessary co-operation may be secured from the church. In addition to the council meetings, there should be monthly meetings of the Sunday school teachers and superintendents.

Relation to parents and community

One of the responsibilities of the council will be to keep before the parents the work of the young people in the church, and to enlist their co-operation. It will sponsor the training classes for the adults. The council will make the community aware of the church and its young people through publicity. It will work with every existing community agency for the improvement of community conditions which will in turn benefit the young people. The council will sponsor beneficial community activities such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and recreational programs which will be organized.

Study of available literature

A committee will be formed under the council to study the literature of other denominations as well as all that published by the Baptist denomination. It will also study the literature of other agencies as the International Council of Religious Education. The committee will recommend to the council the materials which would seem to meet the needs of the church. This will include elective courses for young people and adults,

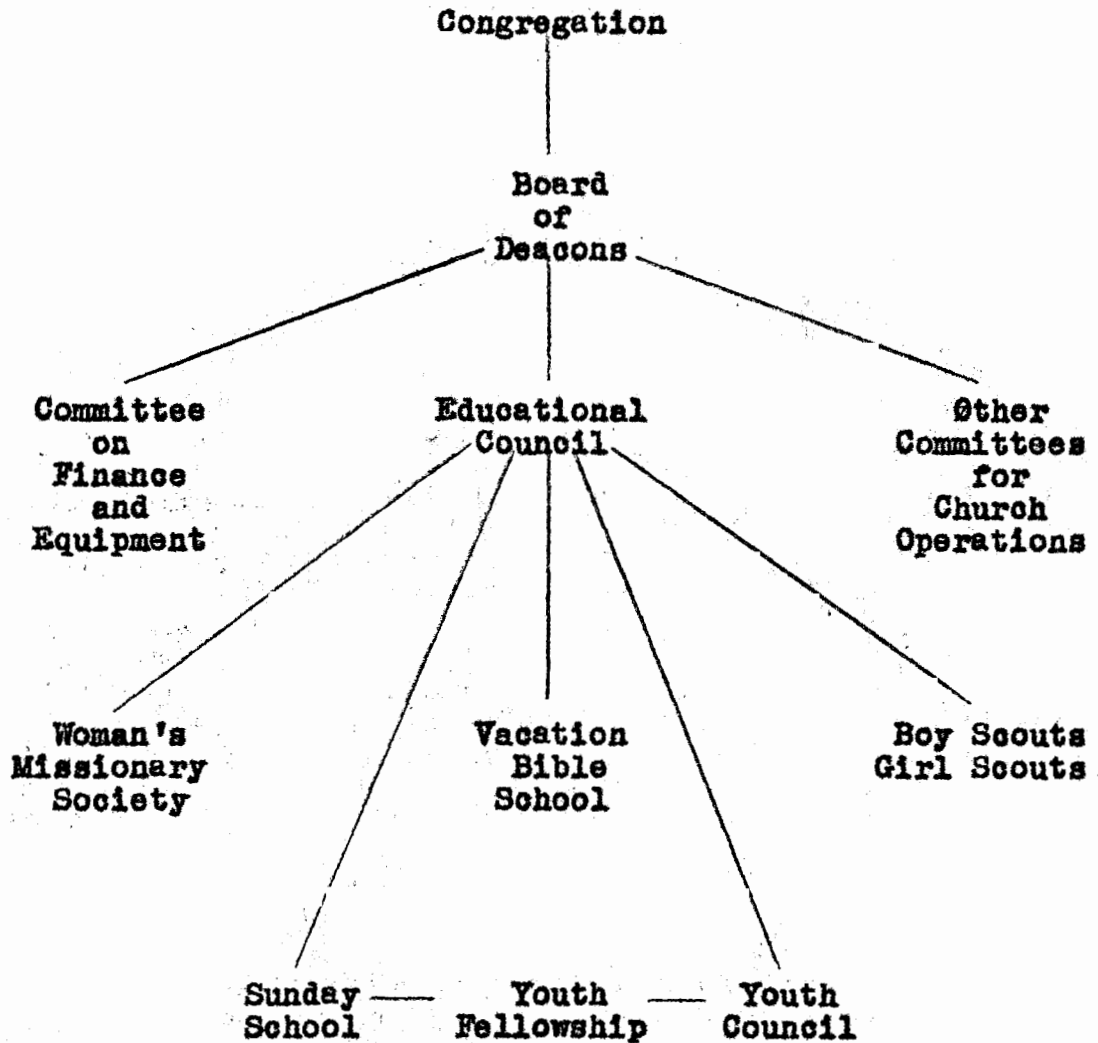
as well as quarterly and monthly magazines. The committee will also recommend the purchase of reference books and maps. Inquiry should be made concerning workbook lesson material for use by Intermediates as well as by younger groups.

Planning a program for the year

The council will plan a yearly program for all departments of the church in such a way that the major activities of each department are correlated with those of the other departments. This program will be built and designed in response to the needs of the church as they have been stated. It will not necessarily follow the program suggested by the denominational board, for such a program does not insure its adequacy. The activities within each department will also be integrated by being planned in advance with a central theme or service in mind.

Flexible plans will be made for the whole year at the June meeting of the council. These plans will include Bible study and elective courses to be given in Sunday school, worship services, recreation programs, and activities of service. These plans may be made by separate committees for the children, Youth Fellowship, and adults, and then approved by the council in general. This section of the paper will be concerned only with the program for the Intermediate and Young People's departments, which comprise the Youth Fellowship.

A diagram may show the relationship of the Youth Fellowship to the rest of the church:



Features of a Yearly Plan for the Youth Fellowship

I. Summer

1. Church services
Two evenings a month, on the theme "God in Nature"
2. Church activities
Painting the church
Taking care of the cemetery
Distributing tracts, especially during the week of the revival services
Preparing a picnic center at the river behind the church
3. Mission activities
Helping the adults in the preparation of canned foods to be distributed to Hospitals, Homes, and the local school
4. Drama
Preparing a play to be given directly before the opening of school
5. Vacation Bible School
Class for Intermediates on "Church Membership"
Class for Seniors - elective on "Our Living Bible" or "Our Living Church"
6. Choir
Special music for the revival services
7. Recreation
Sunday school picnic
Organizing church baseball teams to play at the school on Saturdays
Fishing and swimming picnic for Intermediates and Seniors
Boy Scout and Girl Scout hikes and camping trips

II. Fall

1. Church services
Young people's communion service and installation of officers of the Youth Fellowship
Special service of thanksgiving and consecration
2. Church activities
Initiating the publishing and distribution of the church bulletin

3. Mission activities
 - Holding services in the homes of those who cannot go to church
 - Preparing Thanksgiving baskets for distribution
 - Special mission offerings
 - Making and repairing toys and dolls for others
4. Drama
 - Preparing for the Christmas pageant
5. Choir
 - Rehearsing songs for Thanksgiving, for Christmas pageant, and for Christmas carolling
6. Recreation
 - Church-side Hallowe'en party
 - Picnics and hay ride

III. Winter

1. Church services
 - New Year's candle light service of consecration
 - "White gift" offering
2. Mission activities
 - Collecting clothing for Europe
3. Choir and drama
 - Producing the Christmas pageant
 - Preparing for the Easter pageant
4. Recreation
 - Christmas parties
 - Valentine party for young people
 - Patriotic party for Intermediates

IV. Spring

1. Church services
 - Life of Christ in Song and Scripture; choir music
 - Production of the Easter pageant
 - Children's Day worship service
2. Mission activities
 - Preparing gardens for the incapacitated
 - Holding a service in the Negro church
3. Choir
 - Preparing special music for Children's Day
4. Recreation
 - Mother - daughter banquet in May
 - Father - son banquet in June
 - Hobby show for members of the church
 - Planning for camp or holding camp on church property

Youth Fellowship

Basis of grouping

The Youth Fellowship will be organized on the basis of Sunday school classes. The Intermediate department will have only one class of about fourteen boys and girls from the ages of 12 to 14. The Young People's department will have two classes. A Senior class will be formed, including about ten boys and girls 15 to 17. The Young People's class will be composed of about sixteen in the age range of 18 to 24. The Senior class will be grouped with the Young People's class in all activities.

The Youth Fellowship will elect its own officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The counselor will be elected by the Youth Fellowship also. The officers, teachers, and counselor will form a Youth Council to guide the program of the Youth Fellowship. The Youth Council will co-operate with the Educational Council.

Time of meetings

The Intermediates will have their own short worship service directly before Sunday school in the Young People's classroom. The Senior class may join the Intermediate class for this worship period if they prefer, rather than meeting with the adult department as the Young People's class does.

The Intermediates will meet with the Juniors on Wednesdays

after school. They will be brought to church by the regular school bus. The Seniors and Young People will meet on Tuesday nights as has been the custom for the Y.W.A.s They will have supper at church, with their meetings afterwards. Until interest and activities are increased, all groups will meet only twice a month. Arrangements may be made later to meet on Sunday afternoons or evenings.

Activities

The major aim of the Youth Fellowship will be the development of a sincere, enthusiastic love for Christ and His people, and a commitment to all life of service in His name. The development of initiative, co-operation, and leadership ability is another of the goals of the Youth Fellowship.

The counselor will work with the young people in planning the programs. The young people will be encouraged to take the initiative in this work. They will be helped to carry out their plans so that they will feel that their attempts were successful and will be encouraged to try others. Every opportunity will be utilized in an endeavor to train the young people to conduct or take some part in the meetings. They will be trained to prepare and present their own topics at some of the meetings.

The Youth Fellowship will carry on all the activities which have been included in the Sunday school work and the

work of the W.M.U. auxiliaries. An attempt will be made to provide a balanced and correlated program of worship, Bible study, service (missions), and recreation.

Participation in Community agencies

The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts will meet at the church on Friday nights. It is expected that the Intermediates will be especially interested. Some of the older members of the Youth Fellowship may wish to help the adults leading the Scout work. On Saturday nights the school will be open for community recreation which will be sponsored by members of the church or by the Doswell Woman's Club to which many members of the church belong.

The church is available at all times for group parties, and church-wide recreational activities, but its facilities are limited for active indoor socials to about 25 people. The church might hold a lawn party once a year for the community.

Activities for Intermediates

Meetings

The Intermediates will have their regular Sunday school meetings on Sunday mornings, when special emphasis will be placed on Bible study, as well as on the application of Christian principles to everyday life. There is a great need for knowledge of the Bible among these young people.

The program of study for the first year might include the life of Jesus, the life of Paul, a study of the history of the Christian church, and a course of study which will teach the Intermediates how to study the Bible, how to pray, and how to worship. The life of Paul and the early Christian church form a background for mission study.

On Wednesday afternoons the Intermediates will have varied programs which may include a study and discussion period to supplement the Sunday lessons. A Bible drill and a Bible quiz may be part of the program. They will carry on projects such as the making of scrapbooks for the children in hospitals and the packing of boxes for others. This may be done in connection with mission study. Plans for church services and any business may be taken care of on Wednesdays. There will also be time for choir rehearsal. When the group plans a play or is taking part in a pageant, rehearsal may be held at this time. Occasionally supper will be prepared for them at the church. During the summer they may bring box suppers or have an occasional weiner roast. An illustration of a Wednesday afternoon program is given. Time schedules are always flexible.

3:15	Active games outdoors
3:30	Study about children in China
4:00	Packing a box for a child in a Chinese school
4:30	Choir rehearsal
5:00	Supper

Vacation Bible School

One of the first activities planned by the Educational Council will be the Vacation Bible School. This will last for one or two weeks. There will be a special class for those of Intermediate age. A class in Church Membership will be held for them. There will be handwork and recreation planned for them, also.

The school will be arranged on an all day basis, with lunch at church and a recreation program planned for the afternoons. The programs may be arranged so that afternoons of swimming in the river back of the church are alternated with afternoons of planned games on the church lawn.

Activities for the church

On one Sunday night a month the Intermediates will take part in the evening worship service. They will plan it with the help of the counselor. One of them will make the announcements of hymns and of the other parts of the service. As far as possible each one will participate by reading the Scripture, leading in prayer, reading a poem, ushering, or singing in the choir. The minister or another speaker will bring the message, unless the service is one which does not require a speaker.

The Intermediates will realize that their offerings are a real contribution to the church. Through taking part in

playlets, including those on stewardship, they are also helping the church. The Intermediate and the Senior Sunday school classes will form the Youth Choir. They will sing in the Sunday morning church services with the adult choir.

Materials

It is as wise to have many types of visual aids in working with Intermediates as it is with younger groups. Maps are important. The present class purchased a map of Bible lands made by the National Geographic Society which has been helpful and is inexpensive. Another larger map is needed. The class may wish to purchase this themselves. Otherwise the Sunday school should supply it.

If the quarterlies have been approved by the Educational Council as meeting the needs of this group, they will be used for Sunday school. The International quarterlies are used because there are not enough young people to be graded by age. Where special courses and materials are not available on the subjects chosen for special study, the teacher under the leadership of the minister, may prepare the course for the class. If proper workbooks have been found available, they should be used by the Intermediate class.

In the Wednesday afternoon meetings or in the Vacation Bible School, the Intermediates may make relief maps for their own class which will help them to know the geography of the Bible lands.

Activities for Young People

Meetings

The activities of the young people (this term will be used to include the Senior and Young People's classes) will be similar to those of the Intermediates, with some exceptions. The program of study in Sunday school will be more suitable for their ages. Among the topics to be studied may be included a course in how we got the Bible and the relation of the Old and New Testaments.

Young people are more interested in the subjects of friendship, courtship, and marriage than are those of Intermediate age. Special courses on boy-girl relationships and preparation for marriage and homemaking may be given either in the Sunday school hour or at the Tuesday night meetings. Mission study may also be carried on during the Tuesday meetings.

In the Vacation Bible School there will be a class for the Seniors who will study a unit such as "Our Living Book" or "Our Living Church" which come in textbook form.

Activities for church and community

The young people will hold one evening church service each month. The members will take complete charge, including the message. They will also help in the morning worship service by singing in the choir, acting as ushers, and occasion-

ally by reading Scripture.

The young people may take part in several projects to improve community conditions. They may start a movement for a community center - either to enlarge the present church facilities or to take part in a campaign to use the school building for a community center when the Doswell school is consolidated with the Ashland school. They may also make investigations, through reliable sources, of good moving pictures and circulate or publish the results each month. This may improve the quality of pictures shown in Ashland. Another project can be a "milk bar" in one of the stores of the community until the school can be used as a community center.

A few of the young people who are sincerely committed to Christ's service can go with the minister to hold a service one Sunday afternoon a month at the Industrial School for Girls in Hanover. The young people may take part by reading the Scripture and singing.

Joint Activities

Church services

One of the many things that the Youth Fellowship, as a combination of the Intermediates and young people, can do is to hold joint church services occasionally rather than separate ones of their own. In this way more elaborate services can be planned than the Intermediates would be capable of

holding alone. The special programs noted in the yearly program will be held together. These included such services as the special communion service and installation of officers of the Youth Fellowship in the fall, and a candle-light consecration service at the New Year.

Church activities

The members of the Youth Fellowship can help in the canvass of the community to enlist children and young people in Sunday school and Vacation Bible School. They may also help in the "Every Member Canvass".

The church and the Sunday school building need repainting and redecorating. The Sunday school building, at least can be done by the Youth Fellowship. The Intermediates can concentrate on redecorating their own room. They may also help to clean the furniture and redecorate the Beginner's rooms.

Recreation

Although the Intermediates and young people would usually prefer to have their own socials or parties, one or two times during the year they should have some form of recreation together to help them become better acquainted. A picnic in the spring and a weiner roast in the fall would be acceptable because all age groups enjoy this kind of activity.

The Youth Fellowship can also plan recreation for the whole church, such as the Hallowe'en party.

Pageants and plays

Many in the Youth Fellowship are interested in taking part in pageants and plays. This is an excellent way for all to work together. It provides an opportunity for the young people to do constructive work in play production, costuming, acting, and singing. Pageants will also make use of the Youth Choir.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

From the study made of rural church problems is general and from that made of the questionnaires, and the analysis of Taylorsville, two things have impressed me most. The first is that there is a need for more interested, intensive work by the various denominational boards in the study of problems regarding young people's work in the rural churches. Not only is there need for such a study, but there is also a great need for help in planning and carrying out programs suitable for use in rural areas.

The second is the need of each individual church for more and better trained leadership. The leadership problems may also be met to some degree by help from the denominations.

Young people's work remains one of the biggest challenges to the church. There are various types of young people in the church: those who are indifferent and those who are enthusiastic; the lazy and the ambitious; the timid and the

poised. They all are looking for something to satisfy their undefined desires, yet they do not know what they are seeking. It is possible for the church to harness the energy of these young people by presentin them with a vital, challenging way of life, patterned on the dynamic life of Christ. Much can be accomplished in the church of tomorrow if the youth of to-day are captivated by the Christ of love and service.

VITA

I was born in East Moriches, New York, on February 17, 1918. I received my B.A. degree from Hunter College in 1939. Later I attended National Bible Institute and New York University. At the beginning of World War II, I started working as a mechanical draftsman for the W.L. Maxson Engineering Corporation in New York City. In 1944 I enlisted in the Women's Reserve of the U.S. Coast Guard. I was stationed in Washington, D.C., where I worked as draftsman in the division of Naval Architecture at Coast Guard Headquarters. Since my discharge from the service in 1946, I have been living in Doswell, Virginia.

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